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Celebrations - March 2013

Congratulations to the Rev. Cynthia (Cindy) Andrews-Looper, pastor of Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville, who has been granted full Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ, in the Alabama-Tennessee Association. Cindy had been previously serving Holy Trinity under a license, since the Association received the congregation into membership in 2006.



Congratulations to the Rev. Thomas Query, Executive Director of Wellspring Counseling Center, Atlanta, who has also been granted full Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ. Thomas will hold his standing in the Georgia-South Carolina Association.

Southeast Conference FAQ's

Who is the SEC?

Who is the UCC?

How Do I Find a UCC Church?

What Ministries are Available?

Is Training Available?

We celebrate the new United Church of Christ, Pensacola, FL for its official listing as an Open and Affirming church. Kathie Carpenter, consultant for the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns, which sponsors the ONA program, states that once UCC Pensacola is granted full standing in the UCC (through the Alabama-Tennessee Association), it will be positioned in the chronology of all ONA churches listed since 1985. The Rev. Patrick Rogers is UCC Pensacola's current pastor. The congregation is the Conference's newest faith community, having begun worshipping only last December.

Safe Harbor Family Church in Flowood, MS has also been recognized by the Coalition, as Open and Affirming congregation number 1065, which occurred on January 11. This reflects Safe Harbor's commitment to providing a spiritual home for the Jackson area's LGBT community since its founding in 1995.

With UCC Pensacola and Safe Harbor Church now ONA, the Conference now has 18 churches, both those in full standing and new starts with the designation. That means over one-third of the 53 total churches in the Conference are ONA, one of the highest percentages in the country. We in the Southeast Conference are joyous for what the

program has meant for those congregations as they witness for an inclusive Gospel in their communities.



ERNA BRYANT HONORED AS CHURCH WOMAN OF THE YEAR Dr.

Erna Bryant, representing Church Women United in Atlanta, was honored as "Woman of the Year" during the Fifteenth Annual Church Woman of the Year Luncheon, sponsored by the Georgia chapter of CWU, at Riverside United Methodist Church, Macon, on February 9. One woman from each of the units of Church Women United across the state of Georgia was honored for her personal witness and service to her local unit of Church Women United, her denomination, her local church, and her community.

Church Women United is a racially, culturally, theologically inclusive ecumenical Christian women's movement, celebrating unity in diversity and working for a world of peace and justice. Erna is a member of Atlanta First Congregational UCC and an associate member at Atlanta Central Congregational UCC. She holds a master's and doctoral degree from Harvard University.

The Rev. Dr. Jeremy Rutledge was installed on January 27 as Senior Minister of Circular Congregational UCC, Charleston, SC. The Rev. Dr. Tim Downs, acting on behalf of the Georgia-South Carolina Association, officiated at the installation at the 11 o'clock worship service before a congregation of 240 people. Jeremy received a B.A. in Religion and Literature from Baylor University in Waco, TX, and an M.Div. degree (with studies in process theology and eco-feminism) from the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, VA. He graduated from Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, with a Doctor of Ministry degree. Before coming to Circular, Jeremy served for ten years as the senior pastor of Covenant Church in Houston, TX, a congregation of the Alliance of Baptist, one of the UCC's ecumenical partners. Emily Woody, Circular's Moderator, also participated in the installation.



The Rev. Richard (Rick) Diekmann began serving Brookmeade Congregational Church in Nashville as pastor on Sunday, February 17. Rick, a cancer survivor, was for years pastor of First Congregational Church in Port Saint Lucie, FL. He received his theological education at Yale Divinity School and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, VA. Rick was ordained by the UCC in 1980.

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